

From:

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Regarding:

Support for Substitute SB 422, An Act Concerning Residential Water Rates, Public Drinking Water Supply Emergencies and the Sellers of Bottled Water

Date of Hearing:

March 11, 2016

To:

Members of the Planning and Development Committee

I am writing to support the changes in wording to the above referenced bill as suggested by Bloomfield Citizens. The rationale behind the request for legislative protection for the citizens of Bloomfield and for the member towns of the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) is transparently logical. Listed below are the changes to consider:

- **Protect residents, not water bottlers during a drought.** If the DPH declares a Drought Advisory, the production of bottled water in CT needs to stop.
- **Rescind water rate discounts for water bottlers.** They extract large amounts of our municipal water and spring water, fill the environment with plastic pollution, and profit while citizens are conserving and paying more.

- **Rescind the *Special Sewer Service Charge* discount for water bottlers (now known as the *Clean Water Project Charge*).** CT ratepayers have paid for years to build infrastructure for clean water; no discounts for corporations.
- **Re-establish a citizen MDC (Metropolitan District Commission) watch dog committee.**
- **Impose a moratorium on any new large capacity agreements** until the State Water Plan is completed and addresses the issue of water bottling companies diverting water out of watersheds.

I would like to emphasize two specific objections to the current plan for establishing Niagara's bottling plant anywhere within the MDC jurisdiction.

Public drinking water is a shared municipal resource, and a private company should not receive permission to resell the water, by whatever means, including by bottling and marketing the water, for profit.

Laws requiring the conservation of water have been enacted with the goal of reducing water use in household, public and industrial settings. Modern building codes require the installation of water-saving devices in new construction. Many consumers would wish to use toilets that actually expel waste with a single flush, but the modern, reduced flow units ironically often require a second flush to operate properly. Many consumers would like to return to the convenience of a powerful shower flow, but only flow-restricted units are available for sale. Consumers have adapted to these changes in the name of conservation of a valuable resource. It is impossible, therefore, to justify removing almost two million gallons of drinking water daily for the profit of one company while simultaneously demanding that the rest of the state's citizens must by law conserve water use.

The sewer charge abatement makes no sense whatever in light of the fact that the MDC plant on the Connecticut River south of Hartford needs replacement. Several times a year, Wethersfield Cove is inundated with raw sewage because the treatment plant is inadequate to handle the flow when the river floods or when there is a prodigious rainstorm. The MDC repeatedly cites lack of funds to remediate the problem. Now it proposes to add immensely to the daily flow of effluent from the Bloomfield bottling plant, and it will not charge the consumer regular usage rates at a time when the sewer system needs revamping. This decision is unconscionable and must be reversed if the plant is to be built.

I submit these thoughts in the sincere hope that our legislators, whose purpose is to represent and protect its voter constituency, will make the courageous choice to serve the best interest of Connecticut's citizens.

Ronald L. Marchetti